



## Sarasota program to train emergency doctors is approved

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Posted Apr 9, 2018 at 12:10 PM

Updated Apr 9, 2018 at 4:52 PM

### Partnership between Florida State University and Sarasota Memorial Health Care System aims to address shortages

SARASOTA -- Approval to launch a new residency program in emergency medicine -- designed to build up the local supply of doctors trained in this field -- has been granted to the Florida State University College of Medicine and Sarasota Memorial Health Care System.

Enrollment is expected to begin in the summer of 2019. Like the internal medicine residency program the two partners started last year with the launch of a Newtown medical practice, the emergency physician program will aim to address a regional shortage of doctors in an essential specialty.

"We believe adding more residency programs is a critical investment in the health of our region," Sarasota Memorial CEO David Verinder said in a news release. "Without these kinds of residency programs, new doctors will continue to leave our region and state after graduating medical school."

Founding program director Kelly O'Keefe was hired last year, and the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education granted official approval on Friday, according to the release.

"Now that we have ACGME approval, our plan is to begin interviewing prospective residents this fall and to welcome a first class of nine residents in July of 2019," said Kelly, the former founding director of a similar program in Tampa with the University of South Florida.

By that summer, the internal medicine residency should be reaching its full staffing level of 39 resident doctors, adding 13 medical school graduates each year. The hope is that after treating adults in the hospital and those with chronic health issues in the

community, many of these physicians will choose to remain in this region for the balance of their careers.

According to FSU medical school records, emergency medicine is a popular specialty choice for its graduates. Out of an initial class of 27 students in 2005, eight entered emergency medicine residency programs. Overall, 123 of FSU's 1,147 medical alumni -- 10.7 percent -- have matched in emergency medicine, making it the fifth-most popular specialty choice, behind internal medicine, family medicine, pediatrics and obstetrics-gynecology.

"The community-based approach is what sets our medical school apart," dean John P. Fogarty said in the statement, "and it's the basis for strong partnerships like the one we have developed with Sarasota Memorial. The internal medicine residency program -- and our collaboration in this new emergency medicine program -- is a significant part of the commitment to producing future physicians for Sarasota and this entire region."

In December, an annual survey of graduate medical education by The Safety Net Alliance of Florida found that Sarasota and Charlotte counties fall into a region where the supply of primary care doctors already falls short of demand by more than 25 percent.

Since 2013, the state has increased its medical residencies by 29 percent. But the report, "Training Tomorrow's Doctors," pointed out that Florida is ranked 11th from the bottom nationwide in the number of medical residents in relation to its population.

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